

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14975

BELGRADE FOR CSCO DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, UR, US
SUBJECT: EMIGRATION OF SOVIET PENTECOSTALS

REF: STATE 225843

1. ON OCTOBER 11, NINEL IVANOVNA VASHCHENKO, A TWENTY-FOUR YEAR OLD PENTECOSTAL VISITED THE EMBASSY TO ASK FOR OFFICIAL ASSISTANCE IN FACILITATING HER FAMILY'S EMIGRATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION. MRS. VASHCHENKO IS A MEMBER OF A LARGE PROTESTANT PENTECOSTAL FAMILY, WHICH LIVES IN NAKHODKA. IN THE VYZOV, RECEIVED FROM A PENTECOSTAL FAMILY IN THE UNITED STATES, TWELVE ADULTS AND SEVEN CHILDREN ARE LISTED. AFTER RECEIVING THE VYZOV IN SEPTEMBER 1976 FROM RELIGIOUS FRIENDS IN THE UNITED STATES, THE FAMILY REQUESTED PERMISSION FROM THE OVIR TO LEAVE THE USSR, BUT WERE TURNED DOWN. ACCORDING TO MRS. VASHCHENKO, HER FAMILY HAS FOR SEVERAL YEARS BEEN SUBJECT TO HARASSMENT AND HUMILIATION FROM THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES, CLIMAXING RECENTLY IN THE ARREST OF HER HUSBAND, WHO IS SERVING A THREE-YEAR SENTENCE IN A CORRECTIVE LABOR CAMP IN THE SOVIET FAR EAST.

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2. IN THE COURSE OF AN HOUR DISCUSSION WITH REPORTING OFFICER, MRS. VASCHENKO MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT PENTECOSTALS IN THE PRIMORSKII KRAI:

STATE OF THE FAITH: ACCORDING TO MRS. VASCHENKO, THE PENTECOSTAL COMMUNITY IN NAKHODKA IS LARGE. IT IS CENTERED ON TWO "LEGAL"

AND SEVERAL "ILLEGAL" CHURCHES. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MINISTERS (SVYGASHCHENNIKI), MAY OF WHOM ARE SERVING SENTENCES IN CAMPS. (DESPITE THE FACT THAT HER HUSBAND IS "SITTING" IN A CAMP, HE IS LISTED ON THE PETITION FOR EMIGRATION).

ATTITUDE OF PENTECOSTALS TOWARDS EMIGRATION: MRS. VASHCEHNKO STATED THAT A NUMBER OF PENTECOSTALS WOULD LIKE TO EMIGRATE. SHE NOTED REPEATEDLY SOVIET INTOLERANCE TOWARD PENTECOSTALS, AND THE ARREST OF THEIR LEADERS.

3. COMMENT: THIS IS THE SECOND PETITION FOR ASSISTANCE FROM A PENTECOSTAL FAMILY THAT THE EMBASSY HAS RECENTLY RECEIVED. IN BOTH CASES, THE FAMILY RECEIVED THE VYZOV FROM RELIGIOUS SUPPORTERS IN THE UNITED STATES. BOTH SOUGHT SUPPORT FROM THE OFFICE OF VISAS AND REGISTRATION IN NAKHODKA (OVIR), NOTING THE STRONG DISAPPROVAL THAT THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAD DISPLAYED TOWARDS APPLICATION TO EMIGRATE TO THE US.

4. A LARGE AND ACTIVE PENTECOSTAL COMMUNITY HAS FLOURISHED IN THE PRIMORSKII KRAI SINCE THE EARLY 1960'S. MICHAEL BOURDEAUX, A PROTESTANT CLERGYMAN AND AUTHOR OF BOOKS ON SOVIET PROTESTANTISM, HAS NOTED THAT AS EARLY AS 1961 THEY PETITIONED N.S. KHRUSHCHEV FOR PERMISSION TO "REGISTER" THEIR CHURCHES LEGALLY AND COMPLAINED ABOUT PERSECUTION.

5. MRS. VASHCHENKO IS AN IMPRESSIVE YOUNG WOMAN. INTELLIGENT AND CONFIDENTIAL

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FORTHRIGHT IN HER RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL VIEWS, SHE ANSWERED ALL ANSWERS WITH CARE TO DETAIL. SHE HAD TRAVELLED SEVERAL DAYS BY TRAIN TO MOSCOW, WHERE SHE STAYED WITH FELLOW PENTECOSTALS. TOON

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